



Tune in

A2 to B1. Teacher's Book



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Universitat Politècnica
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Centro de Lenguas UPV: Cristina Pérez Guillot

Tune in

Improving oral skills
with auditory stimulation

English A2 to B1

Teacher's Book

Mike Bennett | Álvaro Capitán | Hernán Cerna | María Martínez Miquel
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Prologue

Since December 2015 we have been carrying out a research project entitled “Neurosensory auditory stimulation: its effects on the comprehension and oral expression of English as a foreign language”.

The study is being directed and coordinated by Dr Carlos García Gallego and Dr Cristina Pérez Guillot. The team also includes Álvaro Capitán Soriano and Hernán Cerna Vergara, acting as consultants and experts in neurosensory auditory stimulation, who are both part of Isora Solutions S.L. with whom the UPV signed a framework collaboration agreement with the objective of carrying out the abovementioned project.

One of the first things to result from this research has been this book, in which we present an A2 to B1 course which incorporates stimulation, taking into account the Common European Framework of Reference level (CEFR), and language learning with a unique approach, where stimulation and learning complement each other leading to a more efficient learning process with particular emphasis on comprehension and oral expression. All the audios were recorded in collaboration with Alberto Sanpedro and treated for listening via the electronic ear by Tomatis Development.

This new stimulation programme was designed and developed by Hernán Cerna and Álvaro Capitán. The contents of this course were programmed in coordination with the stimulation phases designed in the programme. The course was designed by Cristina Pérez Guillot and developed with the participation of teachers from the UPV Centro de Lenguas: Mike Bennett, David Rhead, Yvonne McLucas and María Martínez Miquel.

This book is for use as a teacher’s guide, as a key to the direction of the learning. This is a new way of learning, basing each unit on a starting point of sounds which are the cornerstone of the unit as it develops.

You will find in this book not only the answers to the exercises but also guidelines to aid the teaching of the material. Advice and suggestions are also offered on how to best exploit the material.

We hope all of this will be of use to the teacher taking on the challenge of leading this new method of learning directly related with the periods of linguistic stimulation.

All the recorded and filtered material is available to the students for their personal use during the different phases of stimulation, both active and passive. The materials will also be used in the classroom to consolidate the target language level.

This combination leads to a more efficient learning process, since the course will offer the student a series of activities based on oral comprehension and expression, something which is always challenging to any student and here receives special attention.

The consolidation of the target level is strengthened by the integration of the phases of stimulation and the language training received in the classroom, requiring fewer learning hours, thus making the process more efficient.

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Introduction

General reflections

Many factors affect the learning of a second language, what is clear is that it is not easy to acquire a balanced level over the four skills. In most cases, not even in our own mother tongue can we profess to have the same level in all of the linguistic skills. Although the difficulty in learning and therefore mastering the different skills may vary depending on the student's mother tongue, what we can say is that the skills which provide the greatest challenge are oral comprehension and expression.

We would like to underline the importance of listening skills over oral skills, one depends on the other, as when we speak, it is so somebody hears us and receives our message and thus an act of communication takes place. In this way, listening takes on a definite social component for us all. Oral comprehension is a process which is framed in a situational context, which will certainly determine the linguistic act itself, and refers to the circumstances of the act whether they be social, psychological, cultural, spatial, etc.

Oral comprehension, then, might be described as a communicative skill which takes on the entire process of interpretation of the discourse, from decoding the chain of phonics (phonemes, syllables, words, etc.) to interpretation and comprehension on the part of the listener. In this sense, the process is no longer merely receptive and it is necessary for the listener to be an active component in the process of communication.

The courses presented in this book have a common and primary objective, to improve oral comprehension and expression, however, we must highlight the fact that its content is not only language learning via the electronic ear, but also by way of neurosensory auditory stimulation. The stimulation phase was designed taking into account the level in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFRL) and, in this way, it is integrated with the language learning programme which is adapted to the stimulation periods.

We should, however, state that although, as we have indicated, there is a direct relation between the stimulation phases and the language training, the programme presented here can also be used as a standalone course separate from the stimulation. The processes complement each other but are not 100% dependent on each other.

We know that by way of auditory stimulation it is possible to broaden the range of frequencies that we are capable of processing. The auditory stimulation consists, firstly, in receiving filtered Mozart music via the ear and also via bone conduction. There are subtle changes of timbre and intensity in the music in order to "to surprise the brain". One of the principal objectives of the Tomatis method is to open up the ear to the full range of frequencies. The aim of the language integration programme is to enable the ear to adapt to the sounds, frequencies and rhythms of the target language.

A "gift for languages" is not so much a gift for speaking them as a "gift for hearing them" (A. Tomatis)

The research carried out by Kaunzner (2001), which focuses on pronunciation, concludes that stimulation by means of the Tomatis method reduces by half the time needed to learn how to pronounce correctly when compared to the classic laboratory-learning method.

In this process, it is not only the ears that perceive sound, but also the upper part of the skull, thanks to headphones specially designed for the purposes of bone-conduction hearing. The aim of neurosensory stimulation is to open up the ear to a wider frequency range, thus making it easier to assimilate any language: in this case,

English. Each language uses different bands of frequency (passbands). Spanish, for example, lies within the bass frequencies, found between 125 and 500 Hz and between 1,500 and 2,000 Hz, whereas English is to be found from 2,000 up to 12,000 Hz.

The programme of linguistic integration combines the passbands, of English in this case, and use of the electronic ear. The student is immersed in the target language, helping him/her to improve analysis, listening comprehension and their spoken level of the foreign language.

In addition to the passive phase, in which the students listen to filtered music both via the ear and through bone conduction, there is an additional phase of active stimulation in which they listen to texts in English and repeat words out loud.

We have included texts in English in this part of our own creation adapted to strictly adhere to the CEFR and match the level of each group, amongst which are extracts from the book *Sketches of Valencia* by David Rhead and Jose Marín Uribe. The use of these texts will lead to improved listening comprehension skills in the target language. In this way, we are linking classroom content to stimulation and to the level of each participant, which undoubtedly makes language learning easier.

Therefore, the periods of stimulation are no longer separate from the training sessions, but rather are complementary. Moreover, language training is carried out using the electronic ear, which will enhance stimulation and consolidate the participant's progress. The course structure is explained below.

Processes in oral comprehension and expression

We believe it to be of interest to give a brief theoretical explanation of the processes involved in oral expression and comprehension, which, as we will see, are intimately related. There is a direct relationship between the functioning of these processes and the way neurosensorial stimulation works. This is at forefront of the planning of our courses and the corresponding periods of stimulation.

Comprehension is a term which we use to refer to the process of listening to and understanding oral communication. We consider listening to be an active process which takes place from the moment we employ pre-comprehension strategies, even before we have started speaking.

The auditory comprehension process has traditionally been conceived from the perspective of the down-up model as we can see in Figure 1, that is to say from the sound to understanding the phrase is what is known as a synthetic processing the processing takes place in order; phonetic, phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic levels passing to the semantic level when we now add a meaning to the words and we, thus arrive to the pragmatic level with the phrases we form a coherent text which we interpret subject to the situation (Koster (1991).

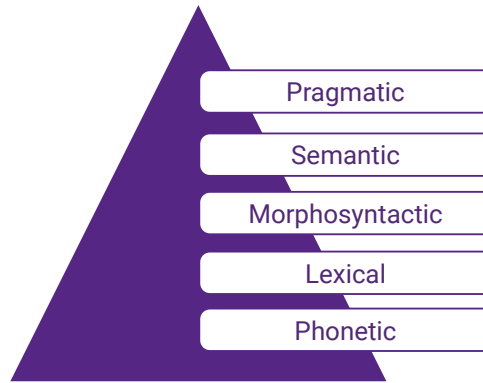


Figure 1. Down-up model.

The up-down model, as we can see in Figure 2, starts with the most general aspects of discourse, that is to say from the text to the sound, which is based on the analytical processes where the listener uses their knowledge of the world and the context.

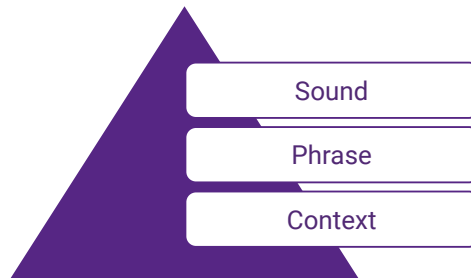


Figure 2. Up-down model.

The most widely used interpretation of this process is that which unifies the two previous models into an interactive model (Fig. 3).

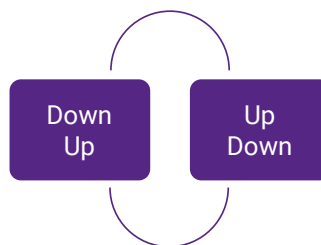


Figure 3. Interactive model

We should state that the lineal processes that we have described above occur simultaneously as they are completely compatible.

We consider listening to be a basic element for communication between people as it is the channel by which information enters from the exterior.

When our auditory system is stimulated in different ways, it develops at the same time as our nervous system, in such a way that we have seen how auditory stimulation is necessary for the maturity of the nervous system and thus this system can process and integrate the auditory information it receives. (Jerger and Musiek, 2000).

We have found various studies into the importance of auditory perception in learning. In order to acquire oral language, auditory information must be adequately processed. (American speech Language Association 1996).

In the same way, it has been observed that auditory perception is worse for the left ear than the right, as the sound must travel further (Goddar, 2005) and this may have repercussions on language. Several authors, notably García Castello (2012), highlight the importance of measuring auditory capacity by way of audiometry, and also auditory discrimination in order to detect possible problems and correct them.

Given the close relationship between the process of comprehension and learning, we must also take into account auditory comprehension ability. A key element is to find out which competences the student needs in order to make good use of this ability, this educational and stimulation process will help us achieve this. Key to this is Buck's definition of competence (2001), Figure 4.

Buck (2001) defines linguistic competence as the knowledge about the language that the listener brings to the listening situation. This competence stresses conscious declarative knowledge and formal learnt strategies: knowing and recognising phenomes, words, inflective forms, reactive forms and grammatical restrictions, and syntactic connections. Grammatical knowledge implies comprehension at a semantic level, discursive knowledge is more related to longer interventions or even interaction. We can define discursive competence as the capacity to relate code units in effective communication situations in order to produce and recognise cohesive and coherent discourse with the context of the situation.

Pragmatic knowledge implies the capacity to interpret and sociolinguistic knowledge is the ability to recognise sociocultural language and to interpret it according to the context.

Sociolinguistic competence is one of the components of communicative competence. It refers to the capacity of a person to produce and adequately understand linguistic expressions in different contexts.

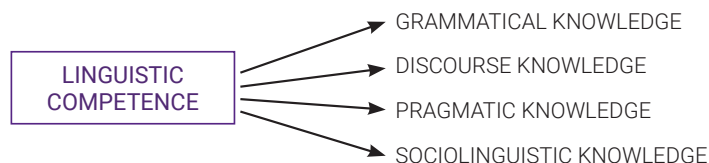


Figure 4. Buck (2001).

The strategic competence is one of the competences that influences a person's effective use of language. In essence, it is the capacity to relate all of the other competences so as to be able to deal with any communicative situation the speaker may find themselves in by making use of the resources that he/she has generated and developed throughout his/her life.

Para seguir leyendo, inicie el proceso de compra, [click aquí](#)